

Topic: Power Sharing

Textual questions

1. What are the different methods of power sharing in modern democracies? Give an example of each.

Ans) The different methods of power sharing in modern democracies are as under:

I. Power Sharing among different organs of government: The distribution is called HORIZONTAL DISTRIBUTION OF POWER. The power distribution is such "that each organ limits the power of other two organs. Hence none of the organs can exercise unlimited powers. The result is balance of power among various institutions. This arrangement is called system of checks and balances.

Example: In India,

- i) The laws passed by legislature are subjected to Judicial review (The power of Supreme Court to Judge the constitutional validity of a law) as well as the veto of resident (veto is a special power to suspend a decision).
- ii) The council of Ministers is answerable to parliament (legislature).
- iii) The Supreme Court (Judiciary) has to consider constitution and laws passed by parliament while delivering Judgments.

II. *Power sharing among Governments at different levels* : In a vast and diverse country like India and USA, power is shared between a general government and the governments at regional level. In such a system, the constitution clearly defines the powers of governments at different levels.

Example: In Belgium, the constitution after 1993, divided the powers between the central , Government and the state Governments of the two regions of French and Dutch communities. This was done to ensure the accommodation of every community in their political setup of the country.

III. *Sharing of power among different social groups*: In many countries, there are constitutional and legal arrangements whereby socially weaker sections and women are represented in the legislatures and administration. This method is used to provide opportunities to those sections of society who otherwise

would feel alienated from the government.

Example: In India, there is a constitutional scheme of reservation for scheduled castes, scheduled Tribes and women in government as well as administration.

IV. *Power sharing with political parties, pressure groups and NGO's:* The political parties share power in a formal way by forming alliances before elections and coalition after elections. This ensures the accommodation of diverse ideological groups within the political system of a country. Likewise, pressure groups and NGO's share power in an informal way by influencing decision making through democratic participation.

Example: Unions of Industrialists, Traders, Workers, Farmers etc. alongwith Environment Movements, Women empowerment movements have made their voice to be heard through litigation, resentments, mass communication, debates, conferences etc.

2. *State one Prudential reason and one moral reason for power sharing with an example from the Indian context.*

A) The two different reasons for power sharing are as under:

Prudential reason: Power sharing reduces the possibility of conflict between social groups. It ensures the stability of political order by accommodating the 'demands and needs of diverse groups in the society.

Example:- India has adopted a federal structure of governance in which power is shared in between the union and the states. This has ensured the fulfillment of the regional aspirations of people who are diverse with respect to their needs, necessities and demands. The accommodation of exclusive groups in the political system has resulted in a sense of "unity in Diversity".

Moral reason for power sharing: Power sharing is the very spirit of democracy. A democratic rule involves sharing power with those affected by its exercise, and who have to live with its effects. People have a right to be consulted on how they are to be governed. A legitimate government is one where citizens through participation, acquire a stake in the system.

Example: There are many provisions in Indian constitution which provide safeguards to schedule castes and schedule tribes such as :

Article 46: says that interests of Schedule castes and schedule tribes must be protected.

Article 338: Provides for a national Commission for schedule castes and schedule tribes. In addition to above, there are reservation provisions in the constitution for SC/ST and women such as Article 234D and Article 243T.